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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Statement-

Release No. 0872.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Mary Dixon

by
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE ESPY
ON COURT ORDER STOPPING SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

October 14, 1993

The following statement was released by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy today from Hong Kong concerning a federal court injunction against a regulation requiring that all meat and poultry products sold beginning Oct. 15 be accompanied with safe handling instructions:

"I am extremely disappointed in the decision of the court to stop the Department of Agriculture's safe handling label. I believe, as I always have, that the safe handling label is fundamental in our effort to prevent consumers and especially children from getting ill all across this country due to improper handling and cooking of meat and poultry products. I would like to applaud all businesses that have moved forward with the safe handling labels and leaflets already, encourage their continued use and urge others to do the same. We will review the court's decision and make a determination as to what action to take to assure that safe handling information will be required in the near future.

"When I came to office in January, I made improving the meat inspection system a priority. I will continue to revolutionize the system, including requiring the handling instruction. The health and welfare of the American public is our number one priority."

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News Releases-

Release No. 0865.93
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COMPUTER ADVICE HELPS NORTHWEST WHEAT GROWERS COPE WITH DISEASE

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12--MoreCrop, a new U.S. Department of Agriculture computer program, is now available to Pacific Northwest wheat growers to help them decide how to cope with rusts, smuts and other wheat diseases.

"MoreCrop predicts which wheat diseases will be most likely, and why," said Roland F. Line of the Agricultural Research Service. "It suggests options

a grower in the Northwest can use to control the diseases, or enables the grower to custom-design and test a control system on his own."

MoreCrop stands for "Management Options for Reasonable Economical Control of Rusts and Other Pathogens." And "that's what it delivers-- flexible options a grower can reason out, rather than fixed recommendations,"

said Line, a plant pathologist at the Wheat Genetics, Quality, Physiology and Disease Research Unit in Pullman, Wash.

Diseases such as stripe rust can reduce yields by 20 percent or more-- and may catch growers unaware, he said.

For a given disease, options may include planting earlier or later, picking a resistant wheat variety or using a different crop rotation. "We see the options as compatible parts of a total farming system," he said.

To make predictions, MoreCrop prompts a grower to identify a field's geographic region, agronomic zone, crop rotation, tillage method, planting date, irrigation (if any) and wheat variety. The grower can modify the program's default values for weather and disease history, Line said.

ARS produced MoreCrop on 3-1/2 inch computer disks. The disks and a printed manual are available for a \$40 postage and handling fee through Cooperative Extension at Washington State University in Pullman. (See ordering information at end of release.)

"It takes as little as five minutes for an experienced user to plug in the data and get a prediction," Line said. "It should save farmers time and money, and it will save me a lot of time, too. Until we developed this program, if a farmer or extension worker wanted help on a disease problem, I might have to spend a half hour or more on the phone or a day in the field getting background information and explaining options."

Line and plant pathologist Ramon Cu constructed Morecrop over the past year and half, drawing upon Line's 30 years of expertise and research data and information from other scientists. Cu provided the computer expertise. Formerly a research associate at the Pullman lab, he currently is with the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines.

More Crop gives growers an on-screen explanation of why a specific disease may or may not occur. They can also get on-screen advice about the types, amounts, timing and need--if any--for chemical applications. The program includes a library of information on resistant wheat cultivars, rust races, maps and a glossary.

Line said predicting wheat diseases is especially complex in the Northwest. "The Northwest has more variable weather conditions, year to year and during the growing season, than other wheat-growing regions in North America. Because of the environmental variations, we also grow more types of wheat, have more kinds of management systems and more kinds of diseases," he said.

"This year in the Northwest," he noted, "we had a colder than normal winter. The computer predicted we would have an increased potential for dwarf bunt, snow mold and cephalosporium stripe. It also predicted that stripe rust and leaf rust would develop later than normal. All the diseases occurred as predicted. The computer provided guidelines on how growers could control them, as well as suggestions on what they could do to prevent them from happening again next year."

ARS scientists at Pullman are planning to work with colleagues elsewhere to adapt MoreCrop to other areas of the U.S. including the Great Plains and

southeastern states. "We've also had requests for the program from about a dozen foreign countries," Line said.

ARS plans to upgrade the program as needed. "Pathogen strains, weather, crop varieties, cropping methods--all these things change," Line said. "We also are considering program upgrades to plug in already- established formulas for calculating economic benefits, to incorporate elements for controlling weeds and insects, and to manage soil fertility." The program runs on IBM-compatible computers. It requires machines with version 3.0 or higher of Microsoft Windows and at least 4 megabytes of RAM. Installation instructions are included.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Roland F. Line, plant pathologist, Wheat Genetics, Quality, Physiology and Disease Research Unit, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Pullman, Wash. 99164-6430. Telephone (509) 335-3755. FAX (509) 335-7674.

The MoreCrop computer program can be obtained from Cooperative Extension at Washington State University. Ask for MCP22 Morecrop. Send orders to Bulletin Office, Cooper Publication Building, WSU, Pullman, Wash. 99164-5912. Include check for \$40 postage and handling, payable to Cooperative Extension Publications.

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Release No. 0868.93
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USDA SPONSORS PUBLIC HEARING IN ATLANTA ON NUTRITION AND SCHOOL MEALS

ATLANTA, Ga., Oct. 13 -- A USDA-sponsored public hearing, chaired here today by Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services Ellen Haas, examined the nutritional quality of school lunch meal programs served to more than 25 million students nationwide.

The hearing, which took place in Bazoline Usher Middle School is the first in a series of four field hearings on "Nutrition Objectives for School Meals," which Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced last month. Future hearings are scheduled for Los Angeles, Calif., Oct. 27; Flint, Mich., Nov. 12; and Washington, D.C., Dec. 7.

"The goal of our school meal programs should be to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans," said Haas in her opening statement. "Children must get nutritious, healthful meals if they are to grow into healthy, productive adults."

"The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are the government's principles--based on sound science--of what makes a healthful diet," Haas said. "Our own data shows that children's diets do not now meet the Dietary Guidelines."

"I saw the statistics on cafeteria trays last week when I joined the students at a Baltimore middle school for lunch. Menu options were cheese steak and french fries, pepperoni pizza and french fries, submarine sandwiches and french fries and fried fish and french fries. Most students chose the pizza."

Almost all of them had french fries. The little boy I sat with added a bag of potato chips."

Haas noted that President Clinton has placed children and health at the top of the nation's agenda. "He is the first President in 14 years to send a budget to Congress with no proposed cuts in child nutrition programs. And his Health Security Plan further underscores his commitment to provide health care to all Americans."

During the hearing, testimony was offered on the health consequences of children's dietary practices, on opportunities and barriers to improving the nutritional quality of school meals, and on suggestions for possible federal action.

Among those testifying were Dr. James Moller, President of the American Heart Association, Dr. Ray Yip, of the Centers for Disease Control, as well as representatives of the Georgia Cattlemen's Association and the Peanut Advisory Board. Three Atlanta area middle school students read their essays on "What's best for me." School food service professionals from Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and several other states also testified.

"All of our efforts to provide more nutritious school meals and improve nutrition education depend on a network of partnerships that connect schools, their communities, their states, and the federal government," said Haas.

"But before we make any policy changes, we want to hear from the public.

"Your comments today will help us reshape our school meal programs. We will take what you say, analyze it in light of what we know about the link between diet and health and act. And I promise you we will act quickly."



Release No. 0869.93
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USDA TO BEGIN MAJOR SURVEY OF FARM CHEMICAL USE SOON

WASHINGTON, Oct. 13 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a national survey involving about 8,000 of the nation's fruit growers. The survey is designed to gather vital statistics about the use of agricultural chemicals (pesticides and commercial fertilizers).

This is the second time that fruit producers have been asked to participate in this survey. "Information from the previous survey showed that two of the most widely used herbicides are bromacil and glyphosate, while the most commonly used insecticide is petroleum distillate," said Sam Rives of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. "The information gathered through the upcoming survey will improve our knowledge of agricultural chemical use."

The survey forms a crucial part of USDA's pesticide data program. The purpose of the program, begun in 1990, is to improve the reliability of pesticide statistics and the quality of public information regarding pesticide use on food crops. The program helps government agencies and policymakers address public concerns about agricultural chemical use.

"Consistent, reliable, and readily available information on agricultural chemical use will enable USDA, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and lawmakers to better protect public health

and respond more effectively to issues of food safety, environmental quality and chemical use regulation," Rives explained.

The producers who voluntarily take part in the survey were selected through statistically valid random sampling procedures. The survey, which will cover 24 fruit crops in nine states, begins in October and continues through December. These states collectively account for about 90 percent of the nation's fruit production and acreage.

Interviewers will visit fruit growers to collect the survey data. Data describing individual grower operations will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

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Release No. 0873.93
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DAIRY FARMERS APPROVE CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL DAIRY PROMOTION PROGRAM

Washington, Oct. 15 -- Dairy farmers across the United States have voted to continue the Dairy Promotion and Research Order, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today.

Voting was held in August, after USDA received petitions with over 16,000 signatures requesting a referendum on the future of the program, said Kenneth C. Clayton, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Under the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983, which authorizes the program, USDA may call a referendum if it believes that sufficient question is raised as to whether the program meets its intended purpose.

The continuation of the national dairy promotion program was approved by 55,713 dairy farmers, or 71.4 percent of the 78,083 votes received from milk producers.

Of the total eligible votes, 49,026, or 62.8 percent, were cast by bloc voting cooperatives that voted in favor of continuing the national program. Block voting cooperatives that were against the program totaled 893 votes, or 1.1 percent of the votes cast.

Individual producers in favor of the program cast 6,687 votes, or 8.6 percent of the eligible votes cast. Individual producers against continuing the program cast 21,477 votes, or 27.5 percent of the total.

All dairy farmers producing milk for commercial use during April 1993 were eligible to vote in the August referendum. For the program to continue, over half of those voting had to indicate their approval.

The Dairy Promotion and Research Order was established to implement a national program for the promotion of dairy products and nutrition education.

The dairy promotion program is financed by a 15 cent per hundredweight assessment of all milk produced in the 48 contiguous states and marketed commercially by dairy farmers. The program is administered by the Dairy Promotion and Research Board, comprised of 36 dairy producers appointed by the secretary of agriculture to represent the dairy industry.

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Release No. 0874.93

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USDA FILES MOTION TO LIFT INJUNCTION ON SAFE HANDLING LABELS AND LEAFLETS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 15 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today filed a motion asking U.S. District Judge James R. Nowlin to reverse his order stopping the implementation of a regulation mandating that safe handling instructions accompany raw meat and poultry products.

The motion was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas in Austin. If the motion is not successful, department officials have said the case will be appealed to the Fifth Circuit of Appeals in New Orleans.

Upon hearing the court order on Thursday stopping the implementation of the safe handling rule, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said he was "extremely disappointed in the decision of the court."

Espy added that he believed "that the safe handling label is fundamental in our effort to prevent consumers and especially children from getting ill all across this country due to improper handling and cooking of meat and poultry products."

Many grocery outlets and producers around the nation were moving forward with the label despite the court order. Espy applauded businesses who had proceeded with the labels and leaflets and encouraged others to do the same.

"When I came to office in January, I made improving the meat inspection system a priority," Espy said. "I will continue to revolutionize the system, including requiring the handling instruction. The health and welfare of the American public is our number one priority."



Program Announcements

Release No. 0866.93

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USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON 1994 RICE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation is requesting comments on provisions of the 1994 rice program, according to Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of the CCC.

Comments are specifically requested regarding:

- Whether an acreage reduction program should be implemented for the 1994 rice crop and, if so, the percentage reduction;

- Whether to establish discounts for the price support rates for aromatic rice varieties;

- The levels of premiums and discounts appropriate for different grades of rice;

- Grades and classes of foreign-origin rice that would be suitable for determining the adjusted world market price of broken rice; and,

-- How to determine the statutory adjustments to be made to the 5- month weighted average price received for rice. The adjustment, which is used in calculating 1994 deficiency payment rates, is to be fair and equitable in relation to the adjustments that are made to the wheat and feed grains 5-month prices which are also used in calculating deficiency payment rates.

Comments must be received by November 12 to be considered and should be sent to: Deputy Administrator, Policy Analysis, ASCS/USDA, Room 3090-S, Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013-2415. Comments may also be FAXed to (202) 690-1346.

A notice appeared in the Federal Register on October 12. For further information write to the above address or call: Gene Rosera, Fibers and Rice Analysis Division, ASCS, (202) 720-6734.

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Release No. 0867.93

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Dallas R. Smith today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	7.95 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	7.21 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	7.12 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	3.97 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
--for long grain:	\$1.74	\$0.00
--for medium grain:	\$1.59	\$0.00
--for short grain:	\$1.57	\$0.00

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Oct. 19 at 3 p.m. EDT.

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Release No. 0871.93
 Minnie Tom H. Meyer (202) 720-6734
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**USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE
 PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14--Jeff Wells, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5- 3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 21. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Oct. 15, through midnight Thursday, Oct. 21.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 79 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 3.08 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	41.49 cents per pound
	1993 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	79
II.	USNE Price	58.20 cents per pound
	NE Price	- 55.12 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	3.08 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price 55.12

Adjustments:

Avg. U.S. spot market location 11.82

SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton 1.50

Avg. U.S. location 0.31

Sum of Adjustments - 13.63

Calculated AWP 41.49

Further AWP adjustment - 0

ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE 41.49 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price 55.12

NE Coarse Count Price - 51.55

3.57

Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton - 3.20

COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT 0.37 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991, 1992, and 1993 base quality loan rates of 50.77, 52.35, and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1993-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments (LDPs) will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1993 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain an LDP on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 1.83 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
	
1	Sept. 23, 1993	57.90	55.27	0
2	Sept. 30, 1993	58.05	55.31	1.49
3	Oct. 7, 1993	57.05	55.21	0.59
4	Oct. 14, 1993	58.20	55.12	1.83

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Oct. 21.

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